

bill to sponsor federally funded job training programs. They need that section in order to discriminate in hiring with Federal dollars. My amendment would delete Section 129 and maintain the law against discrimination.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, when the government refuses to prohibit discrimination based on religion, it cannot effectively enforce laws against discrimination based on race or national origin. Many churches are all virtually white; others virtually all black. So if they restrict hiring based on their religious organization, they can effectively discriminate based on race. And if we do not enforce discrimination laws in Federal contracts with secular programs, where is our moral authority to tell private employers who may be devoutly religious that they cannot discriminate with their private money?

Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, if an employer had a problem hiring the best qualified applicant because of discrimination based on race or religion, that employer had a problem because the weight of the Federal Government was behind the victim of discrimination. The underlying, without my amendment, proposes to shift the weight of the Federal Government from supporting the victim of discrimination to supporting some so-called right to discriminate with Federal funds. That is a profound change in civil rights protection.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the majority try to defend the discrimination with misleading and poll-tested rhetoric. For example, I read in a Dear Colleague that the bill is one that would "restore hiring protections for faith-based organizations participating in federal job training programs." Mr. Speaker, Section 129 does not restore anything. People have not been able to discriminate in Federal contracts since 1965 and specifically not in any job training program since 1982. If anything is being restored, it is the ugly practice of discrimination that existed before the 1960s.

The Dear Colleague went on to say that Congress needs to "continue to uphold the basic civil right of America's religious organizations to hire the staff they judge to be best qualified to carry out their programs and missions when they provide job training assistance." Mr. Speaker, the language fails to say that they can hire whoever they want to promote their religious missions with the church money. But with the Federal money, they have got to hire the best qualified for the Federal mission the tax dollars were appropriated to promote without discrimination. Funds appropriated under this bill are not gifts or grants to churches. They are contracts for government services, and we should honor the tradition begun in 1941, which prohibits discrimination.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, Dear Colleague talks about barriers that exist to prevent faith-based organizations

from fully participating in government-sponsored programs, but it does not say what the barrier is. In fact, the only barrier is one cannot discriminate. Any program that can get funded under the underlying bill could be funded without Section 129 if the sponsoring organization would agree not to discriminate in employment. As a representative said during the debate on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he said, "Stop the discrimination, get the money; continue the discrimination, do not get the money."

Employment discrimination is ugly. We can put lipstick on a pick, but we cannot pass it off as a beauty queen, and we cannot dress up "we do not hire Catholics and Jews" with poll-tested semantics and euphemisms and pass it off as anything other than ugly discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, religious organizations actively supported the Civil Rights Act 40 years ago. Today they support the nondiscrimination provision in the Workforce Investment Act the way it is and they oppose Section 129.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill unless traditional civil rights protections are included.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) will control the time of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 27, the administration's job training reauthorization bill, would, among other misguided actions, harm veterans' employment programs and critical vocational rehabilitation services.

Specifically, this bill would permit States to siphon off Federal resources from already underfunded veterans' employment programs that operate under State "one-stop" centers. Veterans and disabled job seekers do not deserve this.

Mr. Speaker, in the 107th Congress, we passed in a bipartisan manner the Jobs for Veterans Act, legislation to reorganize, update, and improve these very same veterans' employment and training programs. Now is not the time for this bipartisan effort to be unraveled. While our troops are actively engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan and many others suffering from severe injuries and permanent disabilities, now is not the time to reduce the resources for these critical job training programs. Indeed, we need to give these programs the chance to be effective.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that States are facing tremendous fiscal challenges due to the harsh economic times, but clearly taking resources from one chronologically underfunded program is not the answer. The responsible thing for the administration to do, the right thing, would be to ade-

quately support job seekers, especially disabled veterans, as well as to assist the States with infrastructure costs.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is not responsible and permits already modest resources intended for the Nation's disabled veterans, all who have served our country, to be further diminished.

I oppose this legislation and urge a "no" vote on the underlying legislation. And as a former Marine, I have benefitted from many programs that help veterans with education and training. As a continuation of those efforts, we must not let these people fall through the cracks that we have in our employment laws.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

May I respond simply to the arguments about our veterans because they are so important to us. Let me reiterate that H.R. 27 does not harm worker-retaining programs for veterans. Not one dollar from this account comes that is meant to help veterans with their training. The programs that we already have in place, specifically the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, the Local Veterans Employment Representative Program, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, already are required to contribute to the infrastructure of these one-stop career center programs. Any money that would come to the one-stop center would be coming out of their administrative funds, not from the money going directly to the training of veterans. That is an area that was specifically covered in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, my friends on the other side have had numerous objections to provisions in H.R. 27. They have a right to do so and I expect it will be warmly discussed in the ensuing discussion of the bill itself. I believe strongly in the ability of our States, Governors, local boards, workforce boards, to be creative and innovative. There is no omniscient power that we have here. People can think for themselves in other parts of this country. And the essence of our government demands that we give them the opportunity to succeed without the benevolent help of the Federal Government.

Our job, might I remind my colleagues, is to make sure the Micaelas of the world never slip through the cracks. I believe, and I have confidence in the ability of local governments to be creative and effective, and I think so does H.R. 27. What we have today is a confusing patchwork of employment, training services. The duplication of those reduces the amount of money we get to use to help Micaelas. Many amendments that we will be discussing